

COVID -19 LOCKDOWN AND IT EFFECT ON THE CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN ALBANIA

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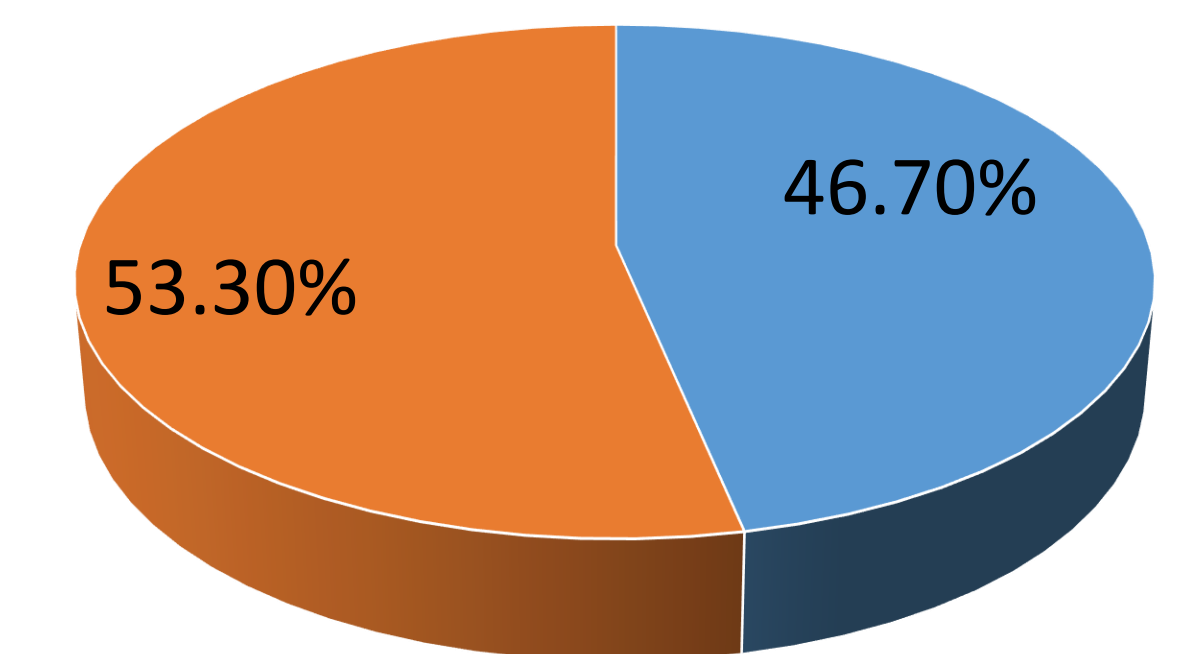
Abstract:

When the World slowly started to get invaded by Covid-19 “an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus “(*Coronavirus*, n.d.), Albania was also one of the countries, that wasn’t prepared at all. The lockdown officially lasted for 2 months (Mid-March- First-weeks May) but for the children with disabilities it lasted longer than that, as schools closed by the end of May and the protocols for the daily centers to provide therapeutically services didn’t come out till the end of June.

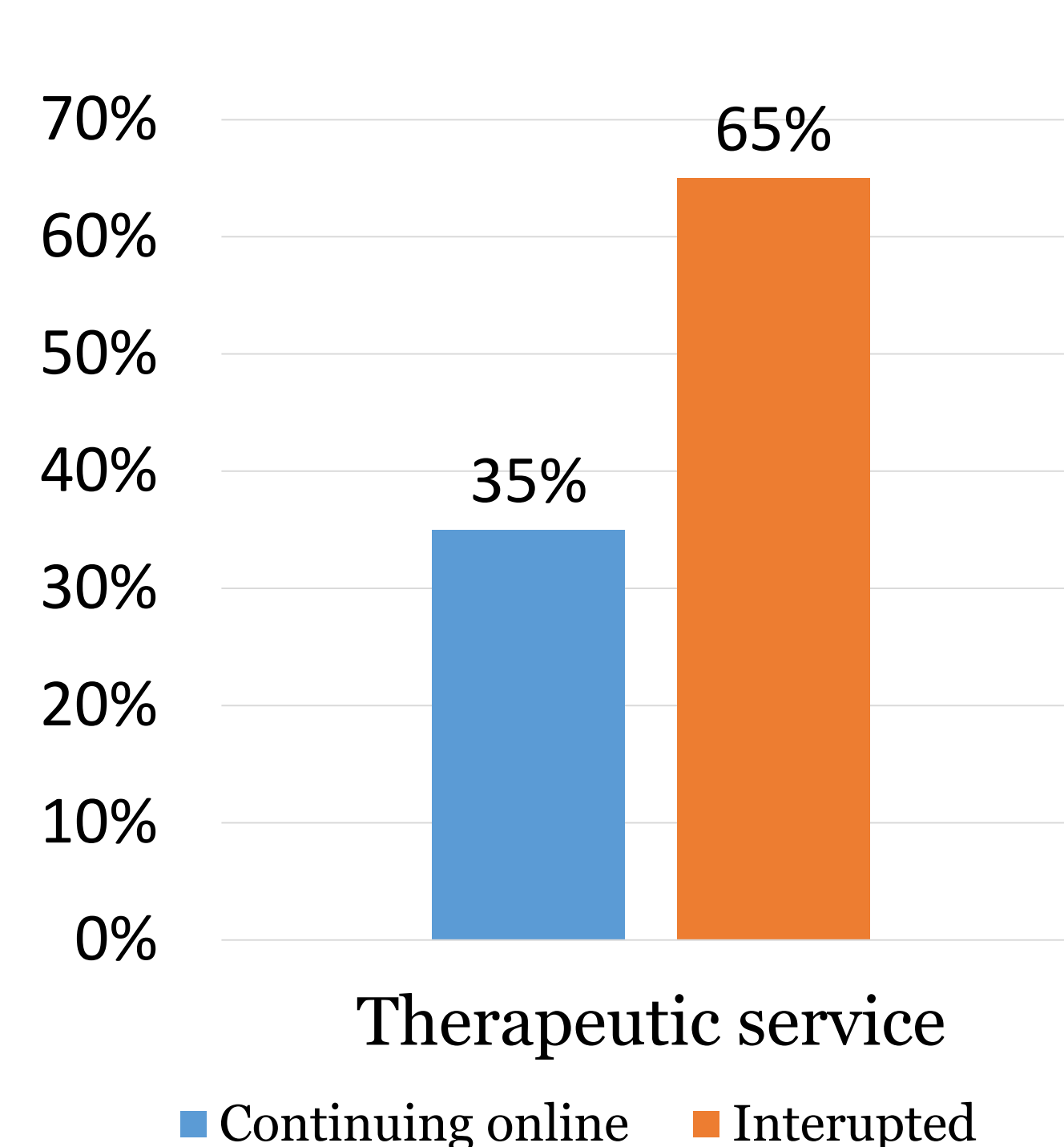
Unpreparedness of government lead un-directly to retardation of development for the children with disabilities, with parents being under stress all the time and brothers or sisters being in line to receive attention from their parents as most of their attention was given to the child with disability since now they were the only therapeutics.

Throughout June 2020, on behalf of MEDPAK (Defending the Rights of People with Disabilities organization in Albania), there was produced an online survey directed to the parents that have one or more children with disabilities. The questions were focused more on the lockdown period, for fields such as education and therapies. This online survey was valid through a link on MEDPAK’s social media account for almost 20 days during May (*Facebook*, n.d.). 238 parents submitted their answers to the portal and the most attention seeking findings toward the government were as below:

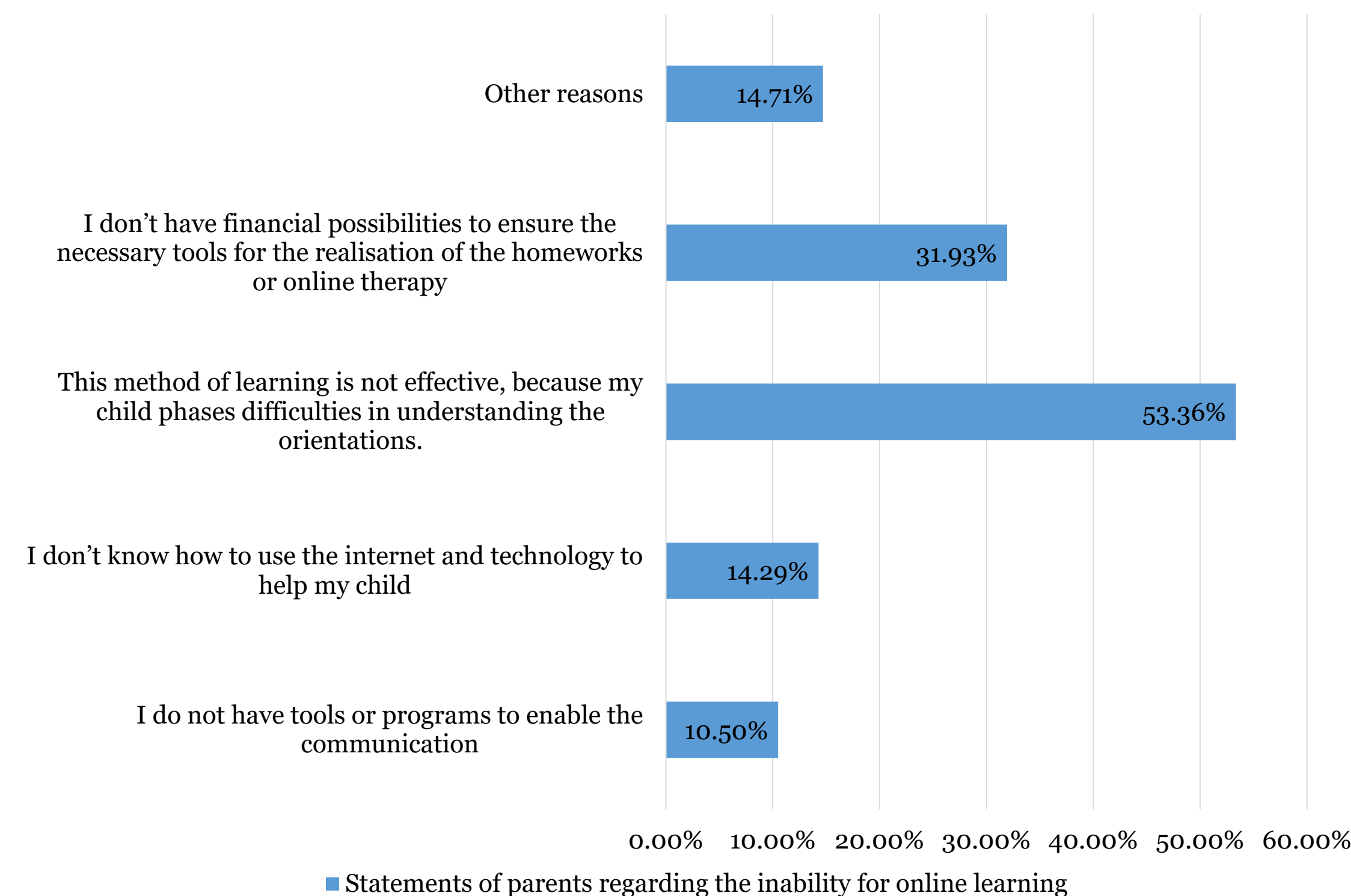
Financial opportunities to educate their children remotely through phone



- Parents that were able to pay their phone bill
- Parents unable to pay their phone bill



Statements of parents regarding the inability for online learning



Solutions or recommendations for the government structures to improve their approach:

- Children with disabilities education should have been prioritized with the same intensity as businesses support or municipalities food packages deliverance, in line with the declaration from the Commissioner of Human Rights (*Persons with Disabilities Must Not Be Left behind in the Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic*, n.d.) ;
- Instead of monetary support, if there will ever be any other lockdown, there should be prepared direct services at home with well-equipped and prepared therapists;
- The Educational institutions should prepare specific orientations and distribute tools for supporting teachers/teachers or psycho-social services, to have the parents prepared and follow remote education easily.
- There is a necessity to modify activities and usage of didactic materials to help the psycho-motor development of children even remotely.

Furthermore, as a supporting statement of these finding, is an article published in May 2020 written by Michelle Phoenix, mentions the same obstacles and more I quote “ Some children with disabilities will [face greater challenges with online learning](#) if there are inadequate accommodations while for others, online learning is simply not an option. Families of children with disabilities are also [more likely to experience socio-economic disadvantage](#), including less access to the [internet and technology](#)” (Phoenix, n.d.).

References:

- Coronavirus*. (n.d.). Retrieved August 6, 2020, from <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/health-topics/coronavirus>
- Facebook*. (n.d.). Retrieved August 6, 2020, from <https://www.facebook.com/MEDPAK.ALBANIA/posts/3334639469966262>
- Phoenix, M. (n.d.). *Children with disabilities face health risks, disruption and marginalization under coronavirus*. The Conversation. Retrieved August 6, 2020, from <http://theconversation.com/children-with-disabilities-face-health-risks-disruption-and-marginalization-under-coronavirus-137115>
- Persons with disabilities must not be left behind in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic*. (n.d.). Commissioner for Human Rights. Retrieved August 6, 2020, from https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/view/-/asset_publisher/ugj3i6qSEkhZ/content/persons-with-disabilities-must-not-be-left-behind-in-the-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic